

picturized edition of **ZANE GREY'S**

WILDFIRE



HOME ON THE RANGE

O, give me a home where the buffalo roam,
Where the deer and the antelope play,
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

Chorus.

Home, home on the range,
Where the deer and the antelope play,
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.



Where the air is so pure, the zephyrs so free,
The breezes so halcyon and light,
That I would not exchange my home on the range
For all the cities so bright.

The red man was pressed from this part of the West,
He's likely no more to return
To the banks of Red River where seldom if ever
Their flickering camp-fires burn.

How often at night when the heavens are bright
With the light from the glittering stars,
Have I stood here amazed and asked as I gazed
If their glory exceeds that of ours.

Oh, I love these wild flowers in this dear land of ours,
The curlew I love to hear scream,
And I love the white rocks and the antelope rocks
That graze on the mountain-tops green.

Oh, give me a land where the bright diamond sand
Flows leisurely down the stream,
Where the graceful white swan goes gliding along
Like a maid in a heavenly dream.

Then I would not exchange my home on the range,
Where the deer and the antelope play,
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

Zane Grey's WILDFIRE



IN THE BREAKING CORRAL
AT BOSTLE'S RANCH, A RIDER
IS TOPPING A WILD ONE,
UNDER THE EYES OF ---



BOSTLE HIMSELF---A HARD MAN, WHO
BROOKS NO RIVALS, IN PHYSICAL POWER,
IN POSSESSIONS, IN AUTHORITY! HE HATES
ANY MAN WHO OWNS A FASTER HORSE---
OR A STRONGER WILL---THAN HE OWN!



BOSTLE, THAT LITE MUSTANG
IS HALF CATANGUNT!

HE'S GOING TO THROW
YAN BICKLE! WATCH,
HOLLEY---



BOSTLE'S WORDS ARE DROWNED IN THE MUSTANG'S
FIGHTING SQUALL---AS THE RIDER LEAVES THE SADDLE.



DAVID L. RAY

COPIING FROM THE HOUSE, MOMENTS LATER, LUCY BOSTE FINDS HER FATHER IN A BLACK MOOD.



DAD! WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?

HURT HIS BACK, RIDING A TWO-DOLLAR UTE BROODMARE, THE NIGHT!

THE WORST OF IT IS, I DON'T TRUST ANYBODY EXCEPT HIM TO GET BASS KING READY FOR THE BIG RACES! THE WRONG SORER COULD SPOIL HIM!—AND HIM WON'T BE RIDING FOR A WEEK...



THEN I'LL TAKE HIS PLACE! YOU'D TRUST ME WITH BASS KING, WOULDN'T YOU, DAD?



I'D TRUST YOU WITH ANY HORSE, MY GIRL! BUT YOU NEVER LIKED BASS KING...

I LIKE HIM A LITTLE—AND MARE HIM A LOT! BUT I DON'T WANT HIM TO LOSE THE RACE TO CREECH'S BLUE ROAN! THE CREECHES HAVE BEEN BOASTING...



BLAST CREECH—AND HIS HALF-WIT SON! THEY'VE NEVER HAD A HORSE THAT COULD TOUCH HIM! I'LL BASH THEIR BIG TALK DOWN THEIR THROATS...



BASS KING WILL DO THAT—WHEN HE WINS! I'LL HAVE HOLLEY SADDLE HIM NOW, DAD!

WELL! ALL RIGHT! BUT KEEP CLEAR OF THAT LOON, JOEL CREECH, LOOT!



COME ON, KING—!

ISN'T THAT A PICTURE, ELEN?

YEAH! SHE'S GUDD TIGHT TO THAT LITTLE SADDLE!

FEELING LUCY'S LIGHT WEIGHT, THE TALL, GRAY RACER GOES STRAIGHT UP.



THEN HE IS OFF, LIKE AN ARROW FROM THE BOW, HIS FIERCE ENERGY EXPLODING INTO WILD, FLOWING STRIDES.

OH, KING---SAYE KING! NO WONDER GAD LOVES YOU SO! AND I COULD, TOO---IF YOU HAD ANYTHING IN YOUR STUBBORN HEART EXCEPT THE LOVE OF RUNNING!



I WON'T LET YOU HAVE YOUR FUN ALL AT ONCE! I BROUGHT MY BATHING SUIT---AND I'M GOING TO STOP AT THE DEEP SPRING HOLE FOR A SWIM! COME AROUND!



A FEW MILES DOWN THE VALLEY, SOME OLD COTTONWOODS SHADE A LOVELY POOL.



YOU'RE NOT THIRSTY AFTER THAT LITTLE RUN, KING---

---BUT I'LL LET YOU NIBBLE GRASS WHILE I SWIM! THERE'S NO ONE ELSE HERE...



A-A-A-AH! HA, HA, HA, HA! SO THERE'S NOBODY ELSE HERE? A-A-A-AH, HA, HA!

CREEK!



JOEL CREECH! YOU---YOU DARNED POOL! DO YOU THINK THAT'S FUNNY?







HEY! YOU LEAVE MY CLOTHES ALONE, LUCY BOSTIL!



I'VE LEFT YOUR BOOTS--- THAT'S ENOUGH!

YOU'LL BE SORRY! I'LL GET EVEN! YOU WANT---



MAYBE THAT WILL TEACH THE IDIOT THAT WE CAN'T SCARE WE--- INSULT ME--- JUST BECAUSE I'M A GIRL! OHWWWW---



---I WANT TO RIDE SO FAR AND SO FAST THAT I'LL LOSE THE THOUGHT OF HIS UGLY, HOWLING FACE! RUN, SAGE KING, RUN!



SAGE KING NEEDS NO URGING! WHILE AFTER HER FLOWS UNDER HIS REACHING STRIDE! THE VALLEY CHANGES. AHEAD RISE STRANGE, SENTINEL-LIKE MONUMENTS OF ROCK.



I'VE NEVER BEEN THIS FAR BEFORE! IT'S WILD---AND SCARIOUS!



---AND THESE GREAT ROCKS! I'VE HEARD THE CONQUERS DESCRIBE THEM! THE INDIANS CALL THEM "FINGERS"---









I UNDERSTAND! MOST MEN—
EVEN MY FATHER—WOULD TRY TO
TAKE HIM AWAY FROM YOU, BY
FAIR MEANS OR FOUL! A HORSE
LIKE THAT—!



LIN SLONE IS THE NAME!
AND YOU'RE AN ANGEL OF
MERCY, LUCY BOSTIL!



I'LL LEAD HIM AND
THE BLACK TO WINTER—
AND STAKE THEM OUT FOR
YOU! I'LL BRING YOU WINTER
IN YOUR HAT... AND TOMORROW
I'LL BE BACK HERE WITH A
BAG OF FOOD! WELL
THAT GO, MR. —P



AN HOUR LATER, LUCY HEADS FOR
HOME, STRANGELY EXCITED.

"LIN SLONE!" I
BATHER LIKE THE
SOUND OF IT! AND HE
MIGHT BE GOOD LOOKING—
SHAVED AND FED AND
DECENTLY CLOTHED! HE'S
NEARLY KILLED HIM-
SELF TO CAPTURE
WILDFIRE—



WHEN AT LAST THEY REACH THE HOME CORRAL,
THE KING IS TIRED—AND BOSTIL LOUD WITH
QUESTIONS.

LUCY! I WAS READY
TO RIDE OUT AFTER
YOU! WHAT
HAPPENED?

NOTHING TOO
BAD, DADDY...



OUT WITH IT GIRL!
WHAT KEPT YOU
OUT SO LONG?

WELL—I STOPPED
AT THE DEEP SPRING
HOLE FOR A DRINK...



—AND I'D BARELY GOT OFF MY
HORSE, WHEN THAT LOON, JOEL
CREECH, POPPED UP AND
YELLED AT ME! I'LL TELL
YOU AND AUNT ABOUT IT
AT SUPPER, DAD!

WH? MYSTERIOUS
MINK! I SUPPOSE
YOU SPENT THE
AFTERNOON TRYING
TO CATCH SAGE KING?
TELL THE TRUTH!

THAT NIGHT AT THE TABLE, LUCY GIVES NO HINT OF HER OTHER ADVENTURE.

HAIR! HAIR, HAIR! SO YOU SHAVED HIS BEARD AND PAINTS AND SPOOLED HIS BLUE ROAN TO BOOT! PRETTY NICE! AND SERVED HIM RIGHT, LUCY!

I DON'T CONSIDER IT NICE AT ALL, JOHN BOSTIL. LUCY IS OLD ENOUGH TO ACT LIKE A LADY!



BUT THAT NIGHT, WHEN THE HOUSE IS ASLEEP SHE VISITS THE RANCH'S STOREROOM!

I HOPE THESE CLOTHES WILL BE HIS SIZE



WITH THE BUNDLE—INCLUDING SOAP TOWEL, RAZOR, MIRROR AND FOOD, SHE HURRIES OUT INTO THE NIGHT.

I'LL HIDE IT IN THE GRASSWOOD—ALONG THE TRAIL—OUT OF SIGHT FROM THE HOUSE... AND PICK IT UP IN THE MORNING.



LATER, HER DREAM OF LIN SIONE AND WILDFIRE—



IS SHATTERED BY A NIGHTMARE OF BOSTIL, FURIOUSLY ANGRY AT LIN ...



BUT, NEXT MORNING—

MRS. LUCY! YOU SURELY DON'T WANT ME TO SADDLE SAGE WING THIS EARLY IN THE DAY?

I SURELY DO, HOLLER! I'M GOING TO TRAIN THAT HORSE WITHIN AN HOUR OF HIS LIFE!



AND, AN HOUR LATER---IN THE SHADOW
OF A MONUMENT---

THAT DUST CLOUD---
IT CAN'T BE LUCK,
ALREADY?

LIN!
CATCH---

YOU CARRIED THAT---
IN YOUR HANDS, ALL
THE WAY---

OH--UHH!

OH, LIN---I'M SO
SORRY! I FORGOT
YOU'D HURT YOUR
BACK!

IT'S NOTHING LUCK---
JUST A STRAIN---AND A
LOT BETTER THIS MORNING...
BUT WHAT ALL HAVE YOU GOT
IN THIS BUNDLE, ANYWAY?

LUCY! LUCY BOSTL! I
CAN'T TAKE A GIFT LIKE
THIS FROM YOU! WHERE'D
YOU GET THIS NEW OUTFIT---
AND THE RAZOR---AND
THE GUN---

FROM DAD'S GUNCH STORES...
AND THEY'RE NOT A GIFT,
LIN SIGNED! THEY'RE A
LOAN, THAT YOU CAN PAY
BACK AS SOON AS YOU
WANT TO!

I'LL TAKE YOUR BLACK---
AND VELDRE---TO WATER
NOW! I'LL TAKE MY TIME
ABOUT IT, SO YOU'LL HAVE
TIME TO GET DRESSED!
NO ARGUMENT, NOW!



YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF ME THIS MORNING, ARE YOU, WILDFIRE? YOU GLORIOUS HORSE! BUT YOU DON'T KNOW ME AS WELL AS YOU'RE GOING TO!

MUNGERY LOOKS GOOD!



THEY FOLLOW YOU LIKE A PAIR OF LAMBS, LUCY BOSTIL!

WHY NOT? I LOVE HORSES, LIN!



I— I'D NEVER KNOW YOU, LIN SLOVE! EXCEPT FOR THAT HUNGRY LOOK—

I'VE STARVED FOR THREE DAYS! BUT YOU'LL JOIN ME AT BREAKFAST—WHEN I GET IT COOKED?



I'LL COOK IT FOR YOU, SWEET! WHAT'S A WOMAN GOOD FOR IN CAMP IF NOT TO DO WOMAN'S CHORES?

WELL— I RECKON— THIS ONE'S MIGHTY GOOD TO LOOK AT!



THAT'S THE THIRD TIME YOU'VE CLEANED YOUR PLATE, LIN! AND NOW I WANT YOU TO TELL ME SOMETHING!— HOW DID YOU CATCH WILDFIRE IN THE FIRST PLACE?

ALL RIGHT! I RECKON YOU'LL UNDERSTAND...



CATCHING THAT KING OF WILD HORSES WAS THE BIGGEST THING IN MY LIFE, UNTIL— UNTIL YOU CAME ALONG, LUCY BOSTIL!



LYN'S STORY BEGINS.

BILL AND I ARE
TURNING BACK, HERE,
UN! OUR HORSES ARE
DONE UP! SORRY, BAR-
NER—BUT THAT'S HOW
IT IS!



DAYLIGHT...

THEY'RE REAL
BARNERS! THEY
'LEFT ME MOST OF
THE GRUB!

"MY PARTNERS AND I HAD BEEN ON WILDFIRE'S
TRAIL THREE WEEKS, WHEN THEY HAD TO QUIT."

"IN THE MORNING, I WAKED UP TO
FIND THEM ALREADY GONE—AND
I COULDN'T BLAME THEM."



WE'LL DO IT ALONE, NASSER—
AND CATCH WILDFIRE, OR BE
TRYING!

"WILDFIRE'S TRAIL LED STRAIGHT
TO THE RED ROCK DESERTS



"ONLY MY BIG BLACK
NASSER, WAS FIT FOR THE TRAIL—
THE TOUGHEST, WILLINGEST
HORSE I'VE EVER KNOWN."



THERE HE IS, NASSER!
SEE THE PLANE OF
HIS RED HIDE?

"THE ROCKS WERE WEARING
WILDFIRE'S HOOF'S DOWN—BUT
NASSER WAS STEEL-SHOED! THAT
HELPED US CLOSE THE DISTANCE."



TAKE IT EASY,
BOY! IF YOU SLIP,
WE'RE BOTH
DOOMED!



WE'RE CLOSER,
NASSER! GETTING
CLOSER ALL THE
TIME!

"WILDFIRE'S GOOSE WAS
TO PICK A TRAIL WHERE
ONLY A WILD GOAT OR
SHEEP COULD SNAKE HIMSELF!"

"DAYS AND WEEKS WENT BY—I DON'T KNOW HOW
MANY! THE BLACK AND I WERE BONE-THIRD—BUT WE
KNOW WILDFIRE WAS NEAR THE END OF HIS ROPE, TOO."





"I TIED MY SCARF OVER HIS EYES,
AND HOPED FOR THE BEST."



"SOMEHOW WE GOT HIM OUT THROUGH THE
GAP WHERE THE BURNING WAS SOO AND HE
WOULDN'T BREAK A LEG, BLINDFOLDED! AND SOME-
HOW HE DRAGGED NASSER AND ME, FOR
MORE MILES THAN I COULD COUNT."



"WE'D COME THIS FAR---WHEN HIS
BLINDFOLD TIPPED! WITH ABOUT THE LAST
OF HIS STRENGTH, THAT RED BRUTE TURNED ON US
AND KNOCKED ME CLEAN OUT OF THE SADDLE!"



"THEN HE AND NASSER MUST
HAVE FOUGHT IT OUT, TILL ALL OF
WILDFIRE'S STRENGTH WAS SPENT."





BUT BAD TROUBLE THREATENS THE MOMENT WILDFIRE COMES NEAR THE SAGE-GRAY RACER! HE SENSES A RIVAL--AND THE MILLER IN HIM COMES TO THE SURFACE.





FOR THE NEXT WEEK, LUCY BOSTIL SEES NO MORE OF JOEL—BUT DAILY, THE TRAINING OF WILDFIRE PROGRESSES. THE GREAT RED STALLION LEAVES LIL AND SARCHESON AS IF THE BOSTIL RACERS WERE STANDING STILL!



AT BOSTIL'S FORD, THE FIRST OF THE INDIAN CROWD APPEARS TO WAIT FOR THE GREAT DAY OF RACES.



MY RACERS, BLUE ROAN AND RED, ARE MIGHTY HIGH OUT OF FEED, BOSTIL! WHEN CAN YOU FERRY THEM ACROSS THE RIVER?

AS SOON AS THE SCOW'S BEEN IN THE WATER A DAY OR SO, CRECH... SHE'S JUST BEEN REPAIRED.



THAT'LL BE ALL RIGHT, BOSTIL— IF YOU DON'T WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE RACES! IF YOU PULL ANYTHING LIKE THAT, I'LL KNOW YOU'RE AFRAID TO LET YOUR SAGE KING RACE AGAINST MY BLUE ROAN! AND I'LL TELL THE WORLD!



BLASPHEM YOU, CRECH! THAT'S AN INSULT! YOU KNOW SAGE KING CAN'T BE BEATEN! AND YOU KNOW I'LL KEEP MY WORD!

I DON'T KNOW ANY SUCH THING, JOHN BOSTIL! BUT I DO KNOW THE RIVER IS DUE TO FLOOD MIGHTY SOON—AND ONCE SHE DOES, THERE'LL BE NO CHANCE TO CROSS WITH MY HORSES! THEY'LL STARVE! MAYBE THAT'S SUIT YOU, FINE!



BEAT SAGE KING? THE MAN'S ORDER! HIS BLUE ROAN IS FAST FOR A YOUNG UPSTART—BUT HE'S NOT IN KING'S CLASS!



FOR ALL BOSTIL'S BLUSTER, A SECRET FEAR SHAWNS AT HIS HEART—A NAGGING QUESTION: IF THAT IF BLUE ROAN WERE THE FASTER? AND BOSTIL IS A MAN WHO COULD NEVER STAND DEFEAT?

A FEW NIGHTS LATER, BOSTIL TOSSES ON A SLEEPLESS BED.

THE RIVER! I CAN'T GET THE SOUND OF IT OUT OF MY EARS! IS IT RISING? TOMORROW IS THE DAY OF THE RACES...



HE THROWS ON HIS CLOTHES, AND TIPTOES OUTDOORS.

I'VE GOT TO LOOK! MAYBE THE RIVER IS UP...



IT'S RISEN AN INCH... TWO INCHES! IT SOUNDS DIFFERENT! THE FLOODS COMING---TOMORROW! AND CRECH'S HORSES---



AT THE FERRY HE STANDS IN BROODING THOUGHT.

THE WATER'S STILL CALM... THERE'S STILL TIME! I COULD TAKE THE BOAT ACROSS ALONE, AND GET CRECH... AND HIS BLUE ROAN, THAT HE THINKS CAN BEAT SAGE KING! ---BEAT SAGE KING? HE DOUGHT! BUT IF HE DO---?



BEAT HIM! I'LL KILL HIM FOR HIS UNPETHINESS! I'LL OVE THE CURSED SCOW ADRIFT! LET CRECH'S HORSES STARVE--- OR CLIMB OUT OF THAT CANYON IF THEY CAN DO IT!



WITH MAD FURY, BOSTIL SUDDENLY SLASHES THE SCOW'S WOODEN MOORING ROPES.

GREAT GRIEF! WHAT---WHAT
HAVE I DONE? I'VE DOOMED
TWO HORSES---AND MAYBE
TWO MEN---TO STARVATION
OR DROWNING!



BUT I DON'T CARE! I COULDN'T
RISK LETTING MY HORSE GET
BEATEN---TOMORROW!



FOR A LONG TIME, BOSTL SITS
STARING AT THE RIVER...

---UNTIL, FROM THE GAP, UP-
STREAM, RESOUNDS A THUNDER
OF MIGHTY WATERS---THE CREST
OF THE COLORADO IN FLOOD!



AT LAST THE GREAT DAY
DAWNS. HUNDREDS OF INDIANS
IN COLORFUL COSTUMES LINE
THE RACE COURSE.



THE FIRST HALF OF THE DAY IS GIVEN OVER
ENTIRELY TO INDIAN RACES... LATER WILL
COME THE GRAND EVENT, THAT WILL PROVE
SAGE KING ONCE MORE THE ROYAL WINNER.



SO YOU'VE ENTERED A
HORSE OF YOUR OWN,
LUCKY? NAME OF
HILDFIRE? WHY
HAVE YOU KEPT
IT A SECRET
TILL NOW?

JUST TO SURPRISE YOU,
DAD! IT MIGHT DO YOU
GOOD IF SOMEBODY
BEAT SAGE KING!



WITH SOME OF THE RANCHERS WHO
HAVE HORSES IN THE BIG RACE,
BOSTL GOES OVER THE ENTRY SHEET.



BEST SAGE KING? NO,
HAW, HAW, HAW, HAW!
THAT'S GOOD!



THEY'RE LINE UP FOR THE BIG
RACE--AND LUCY'S NOT IN SIGHT...
NO--WAIT! THERE'S SOMEBODY
COMING ON A RED HORSE...

ON THE GRANDSTAND THAT AFTERNOON,
BORTIL IS STILL CHUCKLING, UNTIL HE SEES---



—HE'S LAUGHING ON A GREAT STALLION
THAT MAKES HER LOOK LIKE A CHILD!



BRAXTON! SHE'S
RIDING A--A WILD
STALLION! A BIG,
SEVENTEEN-HAND
BRUTE, AS RED
AS FIRE!

A GREAT HOSS, BORTIL!
I CAN TELL, EVEN FROM
HERE! NO WONDER
SHE CALLED HIM
WILDFIRE!



THEY'RE OFF!

QUICKLY SAGE KING, RIDEN BY VAN SICKLE,
FORGES TO THE LEAD, ON THE INSIDE...



WITH WILDFIRE ON THE OUTSIDE, THE LINE OF
SPLENDID HORSES SWAYS INTO ITS STRIDE.



AND NOW THE RED STALLION, ON THE OUTSIDE, LEAVES THE OTHERS BEHIND! COMPETITION MAKES HIM FURIOUS!



LIKE A RED ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION HE CLOVES IN ON THE KING! LUCY, SEEING HIS INTENTION, PULLS BACK WITH ALL HER STRENGTH...

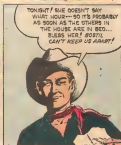


---AND FALLS, OFF THE COURSE! THE RED WARLORD, WITH THE BIT IN HIS TEETH THUNDERS ON!











THAT EVENING,
AT SUNDOWN---

WHERE'S LUCY, JANE?
ISN'T SHE COMING TO
SUPPER?



NO, JOHN... SHE'S IN HER ROOM,
SULKING! YOU HANDLED HER
ALMOST AS ROUGHLY AS YOU DID
LIN SLOVE, SHE TOLD ME.

UMPH--!



ALL RIGHT--LET HER SULK! SHE'LL GET
OVER IT! AND WHEN SHE DOES
MARRY ANYBODY, I'LL PICK THE MAN!
YA HEAR ME, JANE--
I'LL PICK THE MAN!

THAT SETTLES IT! I
HON'T FEEL BADLY ABOUT
LEAVING HOME NOW!



DAD WILL LEARN--THAT
HE DOESN'T OWN ME--
BODY OR SOUL!



I'M PROBABLY TOO
EARLY TO MEET LIN...
BUT I'D RATHER WAIT
HERE, IN THE
COTTONWOODS...



Uggg--!

DON'T STRUGGLE--OR I'LL
HAVE TO HURT YOU!

WITHOUT WARNING, A MAN'S ARM
GRIPS HER LIKE A VISE! A SWELL OF
STALE PERSPARATION--OF HORSE AND
MAN-- ASSAULTS HER NOSTRILS.



YOU GOT HER
TIED UP, PA?

NOT YET, JOEL---AND
MAYBE I WON'T NEED
TO DO IT...



DON'T YER GIRL, OR I'LL
HAVE TO CHASE YOU!
WILL YOU COME WITH
US QUIET---OR TIED
AND GASSED?

I---I'LL BE QUIET...
BUT LEV CREED,
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
DON'T YOU KNOW MY
DAD WILL TELL
YOU...?



HE WON'T GET THE CHANCE!
BOSTIL GOT LOOSE THE
FERRY---AND COST ME
MY RACERS! THEY WERE
KILLED, TRYING TO CLIMB
OUT OF THE CANYON.
AFTER THE FLOOD! I'M
A BROKEN MAN--- BUT
I AM TO GET EVEN
WITH BOSTIL, IN THE
ONLY WAY I KNOW
NOW! NOW GET UP
ON THAT BLACK HOSS!

CREED!
TELL ME---

NO TELL---
TILL WE'RE
AWAY FROM
BOSTIL'S
FORD!



AT DAWN---THIRTY MILES FROM THE
FORD, AND DEEP IN THE DARKEN
MOUNTAINS, CREED SPEAKS FOR
THE FIRST TIME.

PULL UP, JOEL,
AND REST THE
HORSES.



I'M SORRY TO GO THIS
TO YOU, LUCY--- BUT YOU'LL
COME TO NO REAL HARM---
EVEN IF BOSTIL WON'T
LISTEN TO REASON.



JOEL, YOU RIDE BACK NOW---
BY THE WAY I TOLD YOU---AND
SEE THAT BOSTIL GETS THIS
LETTER! UNLESS HE'S CRAZY
HE'LL SEND YOU BACK TO ME
WITH BAGE KING AND ALL
HIS RACERS--- THE PRICE
OF HIS DAUGHTER'S
RETURN!

AT THE SAME MOMENT, NEAR THE
COTTONWOODS AT BOSTLE'S RANCH--

"MORNING, SUGAR! I
FIGURED YOU'D BE
GONE BEFORE THIS--"

"COME HERE,
HOLLEY! LOOK AT
THESE TRACKS!"

"TRACKS OF TWO MEN
AND THREE HORSES!
AND--HERE! THIS
LITTLE PRINT WAS
MADE BY A WOMAN'S
BOOT-- LUCY
BOSTLE'S!"

"MADE EARLY LAST
EVENING, HOLLEY!
THAT'S WHEN LUCY
WAS KIDNAPPED!"

"KIDNAPPED? HOW--
WHAT MAKES YOU
SO SURE, SUGAR?"

"BECAUSE OF HER NOTE! SHE
WAS GOING TO MEET ME IN
THE COTTONWOODS... I'VE
BEEN WAITING THERE
ALL NIGHT!"

"HER BOOT PRINTS ARE UNDER
HER WINDOW AND UNDER THE TREES!
SHE HAD COME--AND BEEN SNATCHED
AWAY-- BEFORE I GOT THERE! SO
TELL BOSTLE THAT I'M TAKING HER
TRAIL NOW, HOLLEY--AND I'LL
BRING HER BACK OR DIE
TRYING!"

DAY AFTER WEARY DAY, CREECH LEADS HIS
WEARY PRISONER THROUGH A MAZE OF UN-
MAPPED CANYONS AND DRAWS--HIDING
HIS TRAIL WITH THE CUNNING OF A WOLF.

"OH, YOU'LL FIND
ME! A MAN WHO
COULD TRAIL HIDEOUTS
ALL THOSE HUNDREDS
OF MILES CAN FOLLOW
ANY TRAIL! HE WON'T
GIVE UP!"

AND ONE EVENING--ON A LEVEL,
PINE-CLAD HEIGHT OF LAND--

"WE'LL CAMP HERE, LUCY--
UNTIL JOEL COMES! THIS IS
THE SPOT I ARRANGED FOR
HIM TO BRING YOUR
FATHER'S RACERS."



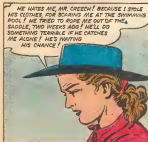
"WERE NOT MUCH MORE THAN FIFTY MILES FROM YOUR HOME--AS A CROW FLIES... SO I RECKON JOEL WILL SHOW UP ANY TIME, NOW, WITH THE HORSES... THEN I'LL SEND YOU HOME."

SEND ME HOME--?



---BUT NOT WITH JOEL, PLEASE! SEND ME ALONE! AND PROMISE ME YOU'LL KEEP JOEL HERE WITH YOU, UNTIL THERE'S NO CHANCE FOR HIM TO OVERTAKE ME!

YOU'RE AFRAID OF HIM! WHY, LUCY? I KNOW HE'S NOT BEEN JUST BUILT, SINCE A HORSE BICKED HIM ON THE HEAD, BUT--



HE HATES ME, MR. CREECH! BECAUSE I SPOLE HIS COFFER, FOR BOARING ME AT THE SWIMMING POOL! HE TRIED TO ROPE ME OUT OF THE SADDLE, TWO WEEKS AGO! HE'LL DO SOMETHING TERRIBLE IF HE CATCHES ME ALONE! HE'S WAITING HIS CHANCE!



NOW, LUCY, YOU HAVEN'T ANY CALL TO BE SCARED! JOEL WAS PROBABLY JUST POOLING---TO SCARE YOU, MENSE. BUT I'LL SEE THAT HE DON'T TRY IT AGAIN.



ON THE SECOND DAY IN CAMP---

HORSES COMIN', LUCY! SEE! IT'S JOEL! AND HE'S RIDIN' SAGE WIND!



YOU GOT 'EM ALL, JOEL? HOW'D BOSTIL TAKE IT?

HAVE MANY, MANY!









SUDDENLY A SLAMING
TREE-TRUNK CRASHED IN WILDFIRE'S PATH!



WITH A FRIGHTY WHISPER LEAP THE GREAT
HORSE SCAMPS THROUGH THE CLAMPS.





TWO DAYS LATER, AT BOSTLE'S RANCH--

